

Dear Commissioners,

Back in May of 2003, I wrote to the FCC urging the commissioners to consider the ramifications of expanding the FCC media ownership rules and how such a decision might further undermine the public interest by allowing fewer and fewer corporations greater control of the type and quality of information available to consumers through both print and broadcast media. Thank you Mr. Copps for confirming that my missive was received and considered. I needn't review the commission's June 2003 decision or the resulting reaction within the congress.

What has prompted me to write this message today is the discovery of Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to require all of its affiliates to run a "documentary" which I understand portrays the presidential candidate, John Kerry, in a negative light. I am not taking a partisan position on the issue but am asking the FCC to consider what the ramifications of allowing a broadcaster with such a significant market share (audience) to make a decision to air a controversial and possibly untrue or exaggerated program so near the election without being required to air any opposing point of view. I would be every bit as concerned if they wanted to play Fahrenheit 911 without allowing President Bush to respond. This type of programming is clearly of a partisan nature and therefore should be subjected to the fairness doctrine (which I understand does not exist any longer, but feel it should). Such a decision has the potential to sway the outcome of the presidential election. If a broadcaster is allowed to air any program that accuses a candidate of malfeasance or distorts the record of a candidate, any candidate, without allowing that candidate to respond, then my fears of the negative effect of media consolidation have come true.

The essence of Democracy requires an informed electorate, ideally free from propaganda but at least exposed to both sides of the issues and accusations surrounding a race. It appears that Sinclair has an interest in tarnishing Mr. Kerry's reputation in the desire to see Mr. Bush elected.

I urge you to take the time to separate yourselves from the heated partisanship surrounding the upcoming election, recognizing that Democracy itself is at stake, and take decisive action to assure that the public interest is served and stop Sinclair from airing any programming for either candidate that can be categorized as political speech without providing equal time for an opposing point of view.

Media diversity is not measured by the number of channels or types of media available, it is in fact defined by the range of opinion and discourse that takes place on the TV screens and newspapers.

Thank you all for your consideration,
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